Amendments to the Claims

Listing of Claims:

Original Claims 1-12 (canceled).

Claim 13 (currently amended). A method for controlling an actuator, including a piezoelectric actuator, which comprises the steps of:

charging or discharging the actuator in at least three stages, each of the three stages having a ~~predefined~~ defined duration of a current further defined by the steps of:

during a first duration, increasing a maximum amplitude of the current from a predefined minimum to a predefined first maximum;

during a second duration, keeping the maximum amplitude of the current substantially constant; ~~and~~

during a third duration, lowering the maximum amplitude of the current from a further predefined maximum to a further predefined minimum; and

adjusting an amount of charge for charging and discharging the actuator by adjusting the second duration.

Claim 14 (previously presented). The method according to claim 13, which further comprises selecting the first maximum in accordance with an amount of charge to be fed to the actuator.

Claim 15 (previously presented). The method according to claim 13, which further comprises selecting the second duration in accordance with an amount of charge to be fed to the actuator.

Claim 16 (previously presented). The method according to claim 14, which further comprises reading out the first maximum and/or the second duration depending on a predefined length change from a characteristic data field.

Claim 17 (previously presented). The method according to claim 13, wherein the maximum amplitudes lie on an envelope curve which, over the first, second and third durations has substantially a shape of a trapeze.

Claim 18 (previously presented). The method according to claim 13, which further comprises providing the current to be intermittent.

Claim 19 (previously presented). The method according to claim 13, which further comprises forming the current to be made up of a series of pulses, with a maximum amplitude corresponding in each case to the maximum current of the relevant pulse.

Claim 20 (previously presented). The method according to claim 19, which further comprises forming the pulses in triangular shapes.

Claim 21 (previously presented). The method according to claim 13, wherein amplitudes of the current increase without pausing after a predefined minimum has been reached.

Claim 22 (previously presented). The method according to claim 13, wherein the current is provided by a final stage depending on a control voltage, with the control voltage being provided by a digital-analog converter.

Claim 23 (currently amended). A device for controlling an actuator, including piezoelectric actuators, the device comprising:

a final stage having a control input; and

a control unit providing a control voltage to operate said final stage, the control voltage rising during a first ~~predefined~~ time period from a predefined minimum to a predefined maximum, remaining constant during a second ~~predefined~~ time period and falling during a third ~~predefined~~ time period from a further predefined maximum to a predefined final value; and

said control unit adjusting a charge for operating the actuator by adjusting a length of the second time period.

Claim 24 (previously presented). The device according to claim 23, wherein said control unit has a digital-analog converter providing the control voltage.